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By Marco Rubio & Tom Rooney

Republicans Marco Rubio and Tom Rooney represent Floridians in the U.S. Senate and House, respectively.

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Over the last few weeks, this newspaper has run at least five columns or editorials criticizing our efforts to ensure that sound science guides water regulations passed down from Washington, D.C., to Florida. In the process, many key facts about this issue have been lost that you the readers deserve to know.

Shortly after President Barack Obama took office, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency drafted a new mandate to regulate numeric nutrients in Florida's rivers, lakes and streams. These standards would impact Florida and no other state, setting higher standards for runoff water than we have for drinking water.

As you can imagine, meeting these almost impossibly strict standards would be incredibly costly. According to one estimate, water bills in Florida would double, and compliance would cost our state \$2 billion per year.

For state and local governments — and taxpayers who would ultimately foot the bill — this cost increase would be devastating. That is why the Florida League of Cities has strongly opposed the mandate. It would force many small businesses to close their doors or leave our state, taking thousands of jobs with them. For Florida's farmers, these mandates would spell disaster. And don't forget that your own monthly water bill would increase considerably.

We also have questions about the science behind this new mandate. This newspaper describes the new regulations as "science-based," but considering that they were announced by President Obama's administration just days after he took office, it's hard to see how much scientific research could realistically have been completed.

Given these concerns, we have made two very simple requests of the EPA. First, allow an independent review into the science behind the regulations. Second, complete a thorough economic analysis to determine the impact of the rule on Florida's families, businesses and local governments.

Some would have you believe that these requests are unreasonable. But in our opinion, if an EPA regulation has the potential to cost our state billions of dollars and thousands of jobs, we want to ensure it is based on sound science. And rather than fly blind, we also demand that a complete economic study determine what the impact will be on our state's overall economy, on the water bills of families and businesses, and how this ultimately affects jobs.

Our opponents say our efforts are part of some partisan exercise. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. We have built a bipartisan coalition in Florida's Congressional delegation with the goal of reaching an agreement. Half of the Democrats in Florida's House delegation supported our amendment to prevent the EPA from enforcing this new mandate until they complete an independent study of the science and a thorough economic analysis. Even Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., has echoed our arguments and our requests for more information.

We greatly appreciate the bipartisan support we have received. In fact, even the EPA administrator indicated during a recent hearing that she would be willing to reconsider our requests. She also committed to work with Florida's Department of Environmental Protection toward a solution that can be agreed to by all parties.

Our goal is to ensure that Florida's water is as clean as possible, because a pristine environment is vital to Florida's economy. We hope to bring everyone to the table to reach an agreement that everyone can support. We are working tirelessly to reach a compromise that is based in sound science, will not drive businesses away and unemployment up, and will ensure clean water for future generations.